

Shoulder range of motion exercises

Information for patients

This information leaflet explains the anatomy of the shoulder, and discusses the importance of maintaining a good range of motion of the shoulder. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your physiotherapist or doctor.

What is 'shoulder range of motion'?

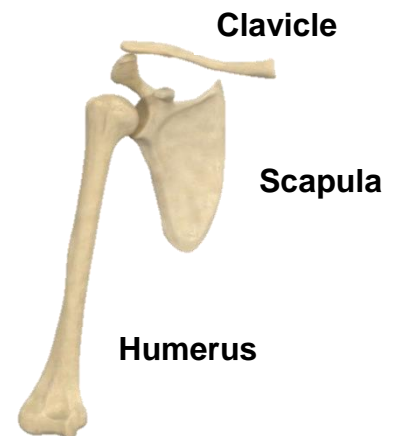
This is the amount of movement your shoulder has. The amount you can move your shoulder on your own may be different to the amount your shoulder can move when you are assisted by a physiotherapist or doctor.

Why is shoulder range of motion important?

Almost every joint in your body is designed to move in some way, and movement is particularly important in your shoulder. If you avoid moving your shoulder it can become stiff and more difficult to move. Simple tasks such as dressing, shaving and brushing your hair can become difficult to do.

Anatomy of the shoulder

The shoulder is made up of three joints, connecting the humerus (upper arm bone), scapula (shoulder blade) and clavicle (collar bone). When performing your shoulder exercises it is important to think about the positioning of all of these joints.

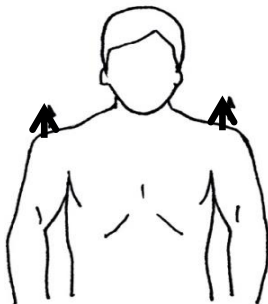


Why perform range of motion exercises?

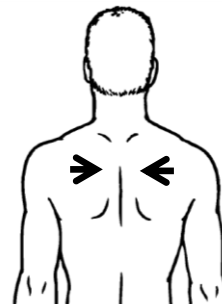
Motion exercises can help to restore normal movement, joint mobility and increase muscular control of the shoulder joints, while helping to reduce pain. It is important to perform range of motion exercises correctly, using the proper technique and at the right time for you. Your physiotherapist will guide you with this.

Range of movement exercises and stretches for the shoulder

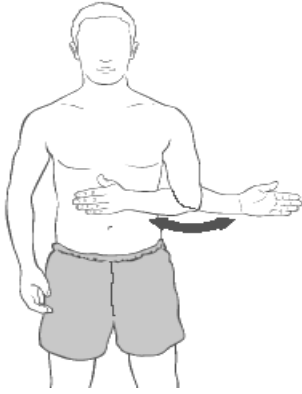
These exercises should only be carried out as prescribed by your physiotherapist. These exercises should not cause acute pain, but may be slightly uncomfortable.



Shoulder raises
Repeat 10 times

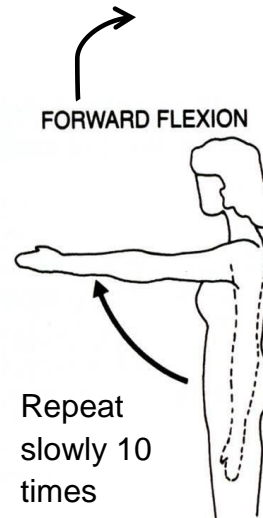
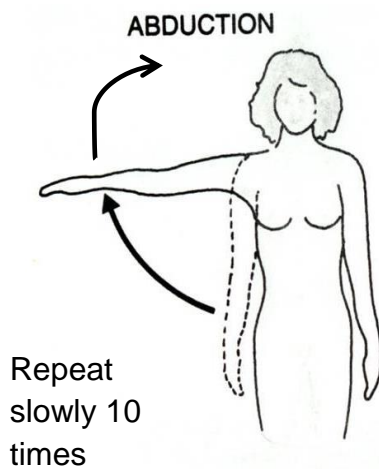


Squeeze shoulder blades together
Repeat 10 times



Internal and external rotation
Keep your elbow still and rotate your shoulder.
Repeat slowly 10 times

Reach forwards and across the table for a supported stretch.
Repeat slowly 10 times



More information

For more information about the physiotherapy service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/therapy-services/physiotherapy/#tab-overview

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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